

DISTRIBUTED PROCESSING OF SEARCH RESULTS
IN AN ELECTRONIC COMMERCE SYSTEM

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An electronic commerce system (10) includes a server (40) operating on one or more computers that communicates a search query for one or more products to one or more seller databases (32) that contain product data. Each seller database (32) generates local search results that are responsive to the search query. The server (40) also communicates one or more sorting parameters to the seller databases (32). The sorting parameters direct each seller database (32) to sort local search results generated at each seller database (32) according to the sorting parameters in response to the search query. In addition, the server (40) receives sorted local search results from one or more of the seller databases (32) and merges the sorted local search results received from the seller databases (32) to generate merged search results. Furthermore, the server (40) sorts the merged search results according to the sorting parameters and communicates the sorted merged search results to a user.